



The Jewish

# Gaily Forward

Cheshvan+Kislev+Tevet 5770 ■ November+December 2009

## What's Up at Sha'ar Zahav

### Rally with SFOP for a Healthy City

SUNDAY, NOV 8, 3:30-5:00

Jones Memorial UMC: 1975 Post Street

### Jeffrey A. Miller Scholar in Residence with

Dr. Francesco Spagnolo

FRIDAY, NOV 13, 7:30 PM

SATURDAY, NOV 14 12:00-3:30

Synagogues and Music of Italy

### Interfaith Thanksgiving Service

TUESDAY, NOV 24, 7:00PM

with the Sha'ar Zahav Chorus

### Klezmer Shabbat on Chanukah

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11, 7:30PM

Join Cantor Bernstein and the band

### Family Shabbat on Chanukah

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 18, 7:30PM

Light the 8th night candles with us!

### Shabbat Simcha

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 10:00 AM

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5, 10:00 AM

### Havdalah And Poetry

Chana Bloch and Chana Kronfeld

SATURDAY, JANUARY 9, 2010, 7:30 PM

### Music In The Mishkan!

JANUARY 31, MARCH 28, MAY 2

Tickets Available Soon.

## Siddur Sha'ar Zahav, Our Golden Bridge

BY RABBI CAMILLE SHIRA ANGEL

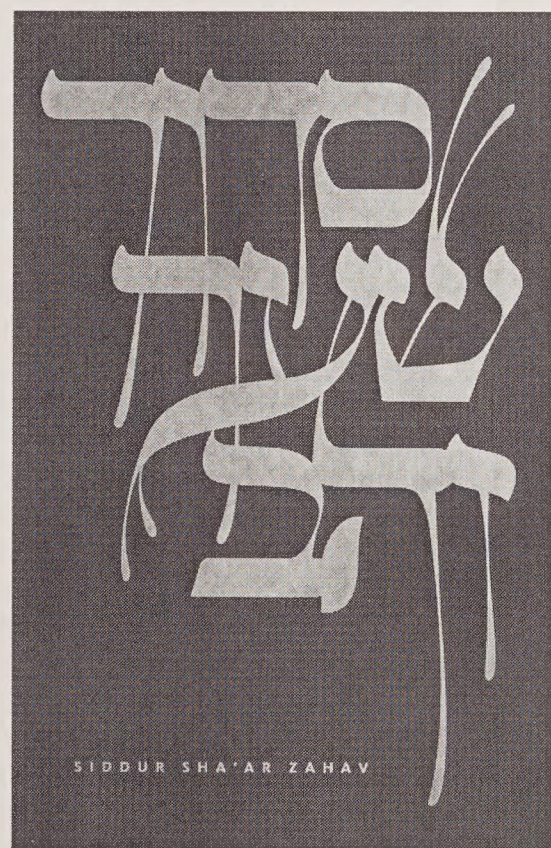
I like to imagine that prayer probably first emerged from a flow of emotions; the heart felt joy, the heart cried out in fear or confusion, expressions of anger or guilt would burst forth. In that depth of spirit, a prayer would emerge. And I believe there was some sort of comfort, support, validation that came from expressing that prayer, some sense of knowing and feeling known; and then the soulful words became part of the oral tradition and then over time the prayer became part of the *siddur*, the prayer book of our people.

One example: Almost two thousand years ago, a severe drought ravaged the land of Palestine, and the community was in severe distress. Rabbi Akiva stood before the ark, and in a spontaneous outburst he cried, "*Avinu Malkeinu, sh'ma koleinu* – "Our Father, our King, hear our prayer!" – and then he repeated *Avinu Malkeinu* and added yet another plea and yet another. And to the outpouring of his heart there was such universal response that *Avinu Malkeinu* entered the *siddur*, the prayer book of our people.

We are told that Rabbi Akiva had five lines in his *Avinu Malkeinu*. By the time, centuries later, that the Sephardic Jews had adopted it for their prayer book, they had increased the number to twenty-nine lines; by the time the Ashkenazim, the German Jews, had finished with it, the number had reached thirty-eight lines, and then, in the Polish-Jewish community, forty-four lines.

My father, *zichrono l'vracha*, was on the editorial board of the fourth printing of the prayer book of Reform Judaism, that old Union Prayer Book that many of us grew up on. Its passages of eloquent beauty and its innovations served us well for a time. But by the third quarter of the twentieth century, Reform Jewry recognized that we needed a new prayer book to reflect the new mountain at which we'd arrived; a mountain that was at once scarred by the Holocaust, inspired by a renewed connection to the land of Israel, and liberated by the feminist movement.

It was then, in the late 1970s that a small band of Sha'ar Zahavniks set out to fashion a new vision from our own Castro hilltop. Our founders and those of the next generation took many of the innovations of the Reform



SIDDUR SHA'AR ZAHAV

(continued on page 4)

(continued on page 2)



# Rabbi's Study



## Siddur Sha'ar Zahav

(continued from page 1)

Movement and began to craft a prayer book that would add OUR story and give voice to our authenticity as gay and lesbian, bisexual and transgendered, queer and questioning, co-partners in the unending work of creation and revelation.

And the people's voices grew louder.... *Avinu Malkeinu, Imeinu Malkateinu Shema Koleinu*...., Hear our voices.... those that have been missing and silenced all these many years. And the plea gave way into a movement for justice and equality; a movement that would require its own spiritual strategy for sustainability with churches and synagogues erected as safe havens where we would bring our whole selves together with our religious traditions. And so Congregation Sha'ar Zahav took its place along with the others in creating new rituals and new prayers for expressing ancient yearnings.

In that process, my beloved predecessor, Rabbi Yoel Kahn took a leadership role. He and a whole team of authors, poets, editors and eager students, led by our lesbian matriarch Batya Kalis, compiled the radically innovative Beta Version of our siddur, which influenced our movement's new siddur, *Mishkan Tefilah*.

Which brings us up to now, the glorious culmination of thousands of hours of labor and love, by Leslie Kane, Michael Tyler, and Jo Ellen Green Kaiser, and thousands and thousands of dollars contributed by 13 donors and HINEI — voila — *Siddur Sha'ar Zahav*. (Hold it up!) Yes, *Sh'ma Koleinu* World Jewry! Hear our Voices!

This prayer book offers us (its users) new entryways to encounter the Divine; to see into a mirror where once there was none; to open a sacred book and find within its' pages such incredible diversity, a colorful mosaic of who we are as a Jewish people.

*Siddur Sha'ar Zahav* is a vessel for the stories and voices of real lived experiences, of a people too often misunderstood, relegated to the margins, if not crucified at the fence.

It is a devotional book of poetry and praise, petition and declaration. It represents our ethic of inclusivity so much so that whether you believe in a God who hears our voices or not, you will be moved by the transformative power of its poetry.

Now after all these years helped by many hands, hearts, and hopes *Siddur Sha'ar Zahav* exists in all its hardbound beauty. We have created a legacy that is unbelievably powerful; A cause for tremendous pride. Daily I receive words of praise and thanks for this spiritual treasury. *Siddur Sha'ar Zahav* is a testament to those who came before us and whose values and ideals speak to us from beyond the grave. *Siddur Sha'ar Zahav* represents both our reality and our dreams. It is our golden bridge, literally our "sha'ar zahav," from what is to what ought to be.

In celebration of our new *siddur*, we will dedicate much of our programming to themes of prayer over the next few years. I will be leading a study group on the Nature of Personal and Communal Prayer using Heschel's book on prayer, *A Quest for God*. We are planning workshops and *shabbatonim*, experiential learning where we can discover our new treasure. We are also in discussions with the Contemporary Jewish Museum and with Stanford University about a symposium honoring our siddur. Stay tuned. I hope you will take at least one of the many opportunities to grow spiritually and explore the legacy that is *Siddur Sha'ar Zahav*.

Please, share this book with friends and family near and far. We have already sent care packages to Israel, as a token of consolation after the tragic Tel Aviv shootings. And we are sending a handful to our sister congregation Beit Warswava in Poland and to Sim Shalom in Budapest. Wherever the book goes, we will be leaving our trace. How amazing!

Source of Creativity and Mystery and Presence, *Sh'ma koleinu*: Hear our voices. In this beautiful and broken world grant us the wisdom and strength to live what we pray. Help us to make our lives a daily commentary on our prayer book, that we may live in consonance with our highest hopes and ideals and serve as a blessing on Your behalf. May this be Your will. Ken Y'hi Ratzon. Amen

## Congregation Sha'ar Zahav

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Congregation Sha'ar Zahav is a member of the Union for Reform Judaism, the World Congress of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Jews, and the San Francisco Organizing Project



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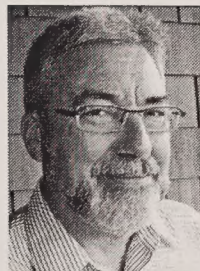
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RECORDER Avi Goldberg



# Sparks in the Air



**STORIES.** Everyone has stories. When Rabbi Angel first arrived at Sha'ar Zahav, she started asking people to tell her some aspect of their story. "Tell me how you came to Sha'ar Zahav, about your childhood, ... when you two first met." In one-on-one sessions, during group events, at shiva minyans, many of us have become more accustomed to telling our stories – and listening too. At first, this seemed like just a handy way of getting to know one another, hearing how we talk about significant events in our life. But this is different. This telling of stories is more intentional, has more complex meaning – both to the teller and to the listener.

I've come to appreciate that someone's story can inspire, touch, agitate, even change our lives. This life-altering aspect seemed particularly true during this year's High Holy Day services. All the drashes and appeals involved personal sto-

**I've come to appreciate that someone's story can inspire, touch, agitate, even change our lives. This life-altering aspect seemed particularly true during this year's High Holy Day services.**

ries. In each case, the stories gave voice to joy and fear, to pain and pleasure, to overcoming difficult situations. By the very act of the public telling, the speakers wanted us to understand and to respond. In this column, I want to address the importance of the stories we heard.

In his Erev Rosh Hashana appeal, Richard Meyerson spoke of moving from "the back pew" to the front of the room as, following the unexpected death of his father, he decided to attend services regularly to say *Kaddish* for him every Friday night for a year. And Richard took on some HHD responsibil-

ities, became one of our Shofar blowers partially as a way of honoring his father's memory, and came to value financial support for the congregation.

Karen Schiller was already in the front pews — I can't imagine that Karen ever sat quietly in back — but in her appeal at Kol Nidre, she spoke of the transformative experience of performing the ritual of *tehora* – of cleansing and preparing a body for burial. She spoke of the profound spiritual awakening that experience provided and how it has motivated her to create similar opportunities for the betterment of our community.

On Rosh Hashanah, Terry Fletcher spoke about having been a regular at Sha'ar Zahav – but not a member – and then being diagnosed with cancer. She reported learning quickly how transformative having the support of a community can be. The starting point for her commentary was an article in *The Jewish Daily Forward* entitled "Why Straight People Go to Gay Synagogues". In her analysis, the article gets reworked as "Why LGBT Synagogues Rock!" .

Personal stories are powerful tools for sharing pivotal moments.

Avi Goldberg was very direct about this in his Rosh Hashanah drash: "I believe that in sharing our stories and our common experiences, we gain strength and become powerful agents of change." Avi related how a recent physical illness also had mental health ramifications – which he was able to

overcome only after "through the caring support of my husband, my family, our cantor, our rabbi, and our community, I began to get the necessary medication and mental health treatment that I needed." Avi spoke persuasively of the "personal and moral obligation to treat each other with compassion and respect" and the importance of Healthcare Reform and the Mental Health Parity Act as legacies we can provide for current and future generations.

On Second Day Rosh Hashanah, Shoshana Levenberg spoke of her journey from an Orthodox, (continued on page 8)

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# What's Up at Sha'ar Zahav

(continued from page 1)

## MORE ON UPCOMING EVENTS

### Interfaith Thanksgiving Service

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 7:00 PM

Join with our neighborhood faith communities for a service of praise, prayer, and song from our many faith traditions. We

invite you to join us as we give thanks for the many gifts in our lives. We will be collecting nonperishable food items (no glass please) so that we may donate to those in need.

### Klezmer Shabbat – First night of Chanukah

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11, 7:30 PM

Join us for this special celebratory Shabbat as we sing and dance to Klezmer music and light candles for the first night of Chanukah. More details to come.

### Chanukkah Shabbat Celebration

FRIDAY DECEMBER 18, 7:30 PM

We invite you to join us for a most joyous Chanukah Shabbat celebration as we bring light to the night with completely filled chanukiot (menorahs).

### Shabbat Simcha

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 10:00 AM

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5, 10:00 AM

Adults and kids join together for a learner's service, then we break into classes. If you liked the community Havdallah last year, you'll love this. A grant from the Legacy Foundation provides lunch afterwards. Learn, discuss, eat—what could be more Jewish?

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

### Havdalah and Poetry

SATURDAY, JANUARY 9, 2010, 7:30 P.M.

Chana Bloch and Chana Kronfeld read from and discuss their newly published book, *Hovering at a Low Altitude: The Collected Poetry of Dahlia Ravikovitch*.

### Music in the Mishkan!

JANUARY 31, MARCH 28, MAY 2

Tickets available soon.

### Cantor Unplugged

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 20

Featuring Cantor Sharon Bernstein

Jeffrey A. Miller Scholar in Residence Weekend  
w. Dr. Francesco Spagnolo

# Synagogues, Music & Mingled Identities

Co-Sponsored by the Italian Cultural Institute

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 7:30 P.M. SHABBAT SERVICES

### No Trespassing: Jewish Nightlife In & Out of the Italian Ghettos

The history of nocturnal Kabbalistic ceremonies in Renaissance Italy, and their legacy today

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 14: SHABBAT LUNCH PROGRAM (~NOON - FOLLOWING SERVICES)

### Music and Synagogue Life: The First 2000 Years

How congregational identities are represented through liturgy & musical performance

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 14: AFTERNOON WORKSHOP (~1:30 PM - FOLLOWING 1ST PROGRAM)

### The Politics of Synagogue Ritual

On the incorporation of political themes within ritual, based on case studies drawn from politically-inspired synagogue liturgy in Italy from the Emancipation to Fascism

Francesco Spagnolo is the founder of Yuval Italia, The Italian Center for the Study of Jewish Music (Milan), and the former host of cultural programs at Radiopopolare and RAI (Italian National Radio). He is now the Director of Research at The Magnes in Berkeley. Francesco serves on the editorial board of the *Journal of Jewish Identities* and maintains *Bella e perduta*, a weblog on Italian Jewish music and culture.

## COMMITTEES

### CSZ-SFOP Organizing Committee Meeting

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 7:00 – 8:30 PM

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 3, 7:00 – 8:30 PM

Join with other Sha'ar Zahavniks in building relationships and in pursuing justice. We have just completed a cycle of house meetings in which we have listened to one another's deeply felt concerns. We will now reflect on what we've heard, and strategize about what actions we will take next. All are welcome to join, as we build a relationship with our new SFOP organizer, Andrea Marta. There are many ways to be engaged, to develop leadership and relationships, and to ACT. Be in touch to find the right fit for you. For more information, please contact Dana Vinicoff [vinicoff@hotmail.com](mailto:vinicoff@hotmail.com), or attend an Organizing Committee meeting: the first Thursday of every month, 7 pm, at CSZ.



### Welcoming Committee Meeting

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 7:00 - 9:00 PM

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10, 7:00 - 9:00 PM

All are invited to join this vibrant, revitalized group as we work to make Sha'ar Zahav the most welcoming environment, to both new and longstanding members. Have an idea that you want to contribute? Simply want to build community amongst fantastic people? Come! Please contact Jim Acerra, [jacerra@msn.com](mailto:jacerra@msn.com) for more details.

### CSZ Ritual Committee Meeting

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6, RITCOM ADVANCE

We invite all Sha'ar Zahav members to attend meetings of the Ritual Committee. You don't have to be a service leader, or have any particular Jewish background. We're looking for creative thinkers and energy to make our ritual life better and better. Contact Aaron about Nov/Dec meetings, [aaron.danzig@gmail.com](mailto:aaron.danzig@gmail.com)

### Va'ad Meeting

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 6:45 PM

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 17, 6:45 PM

All are welcome to attend and listen to Sha'ar Zahav's monthly board meeting with its pre-set agenda.

### Communications Committee

We meet virtually via googlegroups and once in a while over a potluck dinner. We are looking for members who are interested in working on the JGF (ad sales, editing), old-fashioned PR (placing ads in papers, press releases), and reconceiving our website. If you are interested, send Jo Ellen an email at [jgkaiser@earthlink.net](mailto:jgkaiser@earthlink.net)!

## CHAVUROT

### East Bay Chavurah

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 6:00 - 9:00 PM

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11, 6:00 - 9:00 PM

We invite your entire family and your friends to Sha'ar Zahav's East Bay Chavurah. Our evening begins with a vegetarian/vegan potluck as we share blessings and check in, while singing, eating, and enjoying each other's company. At around 7:30, adults (and teens) are invited to join in meaningful text-based Jewish dialogue (childcare is available dur-

ing this time). For more info, please contact Jim Greenberg, [jgjb@earthlink.net](mailto:jgjb@earthlink.net).

### Post Oneg Social Group

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 20, ~9:00 PM

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 18, ~9:00 PM

After welcoming the Sabbath at Sha'ar Zahav's Friday night services, we invite you to join Sha'ar Zahav's Post Oneg Group for some further Shabbat Joy at a local restaurant. All Ages, All Sexual Orientations, All Genders, All Ethnicities, All Relationship Statuses Welcome! For more information contact Jim Acerra at [jacerra@msn.com](mailto:jacerra@msn.com) or Tony Enriquez at [arnold\\_enriquez@hotmail.com](mailto:arnold_enriquez@hotmail.com).

## CLASSES

### Choosing Judaism: A Discussion Group

6 TUESDAYS: NOVEMBER 17, DECEMBER 15, JANUARY 12, FEBRUARY 9, MARCH 9, APRIL 13  
7:00 - 9:00 PM

This class, which meets once per month for six months, will explore issues that arise for people who are considering, or are in the process of, converting to Judaism. This class is not an introduction to Judaism, but rather a place to ask questions and discuss issues with others who are also on this journey. Participants must have met at least once with Rabbi Angel prior to enrolling in this class. Facilitated by Rose Katz and Andrew Ramer. *Please note: In order to create a comfortable group environment, this class will not be open to new participants after the second session on December 15th.*

### Religious Fundamentalism: A Challenge to Tradition and Society

3 MONDAYS, NOVEMBER 30, DECEMBER 7 & 14 7:00 PM

Modernity and the age of enlightenment have not resulted in a more civil, peaceful and moral world. There are people who feel out of control and vulnerable in a world of pluralism, uncertainty, and moral and religious confusion. This is the fertile ground on which zealots become militant and reactionary. This course will examine the background of the fundamentalism of different religions, as well as the differences and commonalities among fundamentalists. Taught by Rabbi Jerry Danzig.

## If you would like

- ★ To celebrate a naches
- ★ To remember a loved one
- ★ To honor friends and family
- ★ To support the CSZ community

## Consider making a donation

Donations can be made in any amount

Contact Shaun at [shaun@shaarzahav.org](mailto:shaun@shaarzahav.org)

# Advertise in the JGF!

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# Finding Holiness



**AS WE** start school this new year of 5770, our theme this unit is holiness. It is our hope that every child at BSPM will have an

opportunity to engage with the sacred.

One goal of our program is to build in each student a spiritual curiosity. We hope that there will be moments that students will recognize the distinctions between holy and mundane time. We hope that each child will get the opportunity to explore their own G-d concept. And we hope that the students won't just have an intellectual experience of holiness but a visceral one as well.

So how will we go about this lofty goal of creating a context where students can really feel and think holiness? From the moment they walk in the door on Saturdays, they are asked to step into prayer and community in opening circle. Once a month, you and

they will have the experience of Shabbat Simcha, which will include, praying, learning and eating together (all key components of the Shabbat experience). I have always believed that Shabbat practice is like a muscle, and the more you exercise that muscle by delving into the ritual practice, the deeper your connection to the sacred can be.

I am aware that young people's lives are more and more compact and complicated. Our students, although young, have a lot of pressure and sadly some stress in their lives. It is my hope that Shabbat practice can give them some menuchah/rest. Our hope is, even amidst the many activities at BSPM, that students understand that this is a place where they can slow down, relax and be exactly as they are and accepted as they are.

The Shabbat liturgy reminds us that we are B'Tzelem Elohim- created in G-d's image. I believe that we help

to reinforce this for our students by creating a inclusive Judaism that takes into account the diversity that we have at the synagogue and Beit Sefer. One of Sha'ar Zahav's former students wrote an amazing Yom Kippur drash addressing this which I hope everyone will read online at [www.shaarzahav.org](http://www.shaarzahav.org)

I know it is true for me that I find some of my "holiest" time working with the families at BSPM and I look forward to the sacred moments we share together on our Jewish Journey (our current theme!!).

B'Shalom,  
Rebecca

## SHABBAT SIMCHA!

**Saturday, November 7**

**Saturday, December 5**

**10:00: Special "Learner's Service."**

Nov 7 will focus on the Shma and its blessings. We know the Shma, but what is the v'ahavta? Why is the Shma always said with three other prayers in morning services?

**11:00 Break-out sessions**

Do art, learn a new prayer, study a text. Adults-only, kids-only, and adult-kid options.

If you liked the community Havdallah, last year, you'll love this.

**12:00 Lunch**

A grant from the Legacy Foundation provides lunch afterwards.

**Learn, discuss, eat—what could be more Jewish?**

## BEIT SEFER DATES TO REMEMBER

### NOVEMBER

- 3 Spiritual Quest Class with Rabbi
- 4 Wednesday Class
- 7 Shabbat Simcha - 10:00 am - 1:30 pm
- 10 Spiritual Quest Class with Rabbi
- 11 Wednesday Class
- 14 Shabbat Class
- 17 Spiritual Quest Class with Rabbi
- 18 Wednesday Class
- 21 Shabbat Class - Julia Shorofsky's Bat Mitzvah
- 24 Spiritual Quest Class at Interfaith Thanksgiving

**THANKSGIVING BREAK:**

**NO BEIT SEFER 11/25-28**

### DECEMBER

- 2 Wednesday Class
  - 5 Shabbat Simcha - 10:00 am - 1:30 pm
  - 8 Spiritual Quest Class with Rabbi
  - 9 Wednesday Class
  - 12 Shabbat Class - Emma Greenberg Bell's Bat Mitzvah
  - 15 Spiritual Quest Class with Rabbi
  - 16 Wednesday Class
  - 18 Family Chanukah Celebration
- WINTER BREAK: NO BEIT SEFER 12/19, 12/23, 12/26, 12/30, and 1/2**



# FAMILY CALENDAR

Questions? Contact Educator Rebecca Weiner at [rebecca@shaarzahav.org](mailto:rebecca@shaarzahav.org) or 15-861-6932 x302.

## Chanukkah Shabbat Celebration

**FRIDAY DECEMBER 18, 7:30 PM**

We invite you to join us for a most joyous Chanukah Shabbat celebration as we bring light to the night with completely filled chanukiot (menorahs).

## Friday Night Live!

**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 6:00 PM**

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 3, 6:00 PM**

Calling all Kids! Bring yourselves and our favorite grown-ups and celebrate Shabbat with us. Designed for children to 6 years, but all are welcome. Our

Friday Night Live service will be followed by dinner in the Oneg Room. We will provide pizza, but we encourage you to bring a vegetarian dish to share with the community as well. If you wish to sponsor a future FNL dinner, please contact Regina in the synagogue office, 415-861-6932 x308, [regina@shaarzahav.org](mailto:regina@shaarzahav.org).

## Shabbat Simcha

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 10:00 AM**

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5, 10:00 AM**

Adults and kids join together for a learner's service, then we break into classes. If you liked the community Havdallah last year, you'll love this. A grant from the Legacy Foundation provides lunch afterwards. Learn, discuss, eat-what could be more Jewish?

## Shabbat Ruach Returns!

**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 20, TIME TBA**

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 18, TIME TBA**

A rocking Shabbat service filled with music geared especially for families. Check your email newsletter for more info!

## East Bay Chavurah

**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 6:00 - 9:00 PM**

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11, 6:00 - 9:00 PM**

We invite your entire family and your friends to Sha'ar Zahav's East Bay Chavurah. Our evening begins with a vegetarian/vegan potluck as we share blessings and check in, while singing, eating, and enjoying each other's company. At around 7:30, adults (and teens) are invited to join in meaningful text-based Jewish dialogue (childcare is available during this time). For more info, please contact Jim Greenberg, [jgjb@earthlink.net](mailto:jgjb@earthlink.net).



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## Sparks in the Air

(continued from page 3)

yeshiva-filled childhood through a long period of rejection of Judaism to an awakening moment when a Santeria priest in Cuba told her that her father, who had died 30 years previously, needed mass said for him. She instantly knew that meant *Kaddish*. This need eventually led her to Sha'ar Zahav. This could have been the end of the story, but Shoshana's two-hanky drash went on to examine the nature of our ancestors, and the need to recognize that, although imperfect, we need to accept, honor and celebrate our ancestors, our families, our community and ourselves.

And on Yom Kippur, Ruby Cymrot-Wu spoke of the challenges many of her generation at Sha'ar Zahav feel as Jews. As children of gay and lesbian parents at Sha'ar Zahav, their biological heritage can be quite diverse – and not necessarily Jewish. Ruby said that she considers herself lucky because no one questions her Jewishness; she easily passes. However, because of their diverse heritages, many of her contemporaries have to continually prove their Jewishness,

have to authenticate their cultural heritage and identification as Jews.

Although this resonates for me as someone who chose Judaism as an adult, it was an awakening for me to think of such a fundamental challenge for many of the children of our congregation who are immersed in Judaism from an early age.

What an amazing group of stories! And my sketches only hint at the richness of the fuller stories – and the very accessible lessons drawn from them. Most of these are available in their entirety on our website – see Archives.

Concurrent with our High Holy Day observances, *J – the Jewish News Weekly of Northern California* published four personal stories of High Holiday Day inspiration. (See the 9/25/09 edition.) Two told the stories of other Sha'ar Zahav congregants. Susan Leff's experiences during her first pregnancy have led her to forever associate Yom Kippur with new life, giving a very personal twist to *tshuvah*: by viewing herself as a parent responsible for another's life, as having to "forgive ourselves to evolve and become the person we want to be." And

in 2000, Glen Hauer found inspiration in the *Vidui*, "the prayer during which people put their fist to their chest and take responsibility for the entire community's mistakes and shortcomings." It provided him inspiration to retire from practicing law and dedicate his time and energy to growing Jewish Voice of Peace, an organization which addresses Palestinian human rights issues.

The High Holy Days are traditionally a time for reflecting on our own stories. And through these congregants' stories, we also hear our own stories. What events sparked some new awareness in each of us? Perhaps a spark to repair the world. Were you moved by someone's personal story? Or by reflection upon your own story? Could something in our stories ignite your desire to work for social justice in and for our community? For enhanced spirituality. To create a more welcoming shul. To provide our shul with a more stable economic base. To offer a caring hand. What's your story? And what sparks might it contain or set off in this New Year? May our community always benefit from such sparks in yourself and in others.



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# Take Time for the Moment

Howard Steiermann IGBTQQI

**IF I CALLED** you at 6am, would I wake you up? I'm not asking how early you get up, but rather, do you turn the phone ringer off when you go to sleep at night?

In the past decade or two, American society has gotten pretty comfortable with answering machines and voice mail. I used to let family, friends and business associates know they could call me 24/7. But a quandary sometimes arose in the morning: am I ready to turn the ringer on? Should I brush my teeth first? Take the dog for a walk? Stretch my sore muscles? It's my choice, my timing, totally up to me when I want to be ready to engage with the world.

I'm sure there's a joke in here about princess phones, but I'm really wondering if there's a connection with how we as individuals get ready to face the world. How do we strengthen ourselves each morning to deal with the inevitable 'stuff' we will have to face during the day?

Upon waking, some Jews will give thanks to G~d for having restored their soul (recognizing that sleep is akin to a kind of death). Morning blessings continue with the recitation of the collection of Nisim Bechol Yom, The Miracles of Daily Life. The blessings remind us of everything about ourselves from the necessary and mundane (the fact that we get dressed) to what I believe is truly magnificent: reminding us that each of us has been created in the divine image and been given freedom of thought and action.

For those of us who don't have steady or enough income, or don't have a positive living space, or are in turmoil with our family or friends, thanking the Divine isn't that easy, although perhaps all the more important. I automatically take a moment of thanks when I have a beautiful meal set before me, but I typically forget to be thankful when I'm eating some food in my face in front of the microwave, or gulping down a handful of nuts when I don't have time to eat.

There's a teaching that encourages us to recite 100 blessings each day. I'm proud of the days when I take the time to recite one, let alone one hundred!

But what if we were present enough to actually recognize the wonders of the world around us? It could even be in bed, prior to getting up. Or as we laze on the couch, or rush to our next appointment.

For prompts, we can refer to numerous books of blessings, calendars with daily blessings, and even our glorious new siddur! It contains over fifty pages of blessings [which is a newly added section written primarily by congregants]. It starts with the "Shehecheyanu: Blessing for this Moment." Many consider the Shehecheyanu a wonderfully flexible blessing, appropriate for most any occasion. The text following the blessing section comes from Psalms, "Hineih Mah Tov...: How good and pleasant it is for us to dwell

together as one." It helps remind me of what I think is the most important life lesson: being in relationship with others.

Perhaps the question isn't, "when am I ready to engage with the world?" The world continues to spin whether we're cognizant of it or not. Perhaps the question is, "how present am I going to be: am I going to hit the snooze button one more time, or am I going to be thankful that I'm breathing, and sleep in a warm bed each night? Perhaps if we recognize the blessings that are currently present in our lives, it will be easier to weather the storms that will inevitably come our way.



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## **Cantor's Discretionary Fund**

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**Meg Keene & David Mishook** in honor of Cantor Bernstein.

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in memory of Elliot Klein.  
in memory of John Golebowski, Bernard Pechter, Jeffrey A. Miller & Rabbi Ben Marcus.  
in memory of Sam Rubin.

**Lucy Bernholz & Paula Fleisher** in memory of Gertrude Bernholz.

**James Carlson**  
in honor of Scott Murray & Nora Heins' wedding.  
in honor of Rose Katz's Schindler Fellowship.

**Henry Carrey**  
in memory of his grandmother, Hinde Brestayner Kirzhner.  
in memory of his aunt, Rose Post Andelman.

**Paul Cohen & Bob Gutterman** in memory of Elliot Klein.

**Steve Elman** in appreciation of Mark Chester for baking delicious cakes for Oneg Shabbat.

**Lisa Finkelstein** with love and appreciation for our community.  
Yasher Koach Meg & David on getting hitched!

**Manny Fishman & Leslie Kane**  
in memory of Martin Cymrot.  
in memory of Elliot Klein.

**Paul Fishman & Mike Kurokawa** in

loving memory of Elliot Klein.

**Jonathan Funk & John Arnold** in memory of Elliot Klein.

**Erwin Furukawa** in honor of Jonathan Funk and John Arnold's 25th anniversary.

**Jerome Geffner** in honor of Jeffrey Lilly.

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in memory of Elaine Drummond.

**Alex Ingersoll & Martin Tannenbaum**  
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in celebration of Ilona Turner and Philip Kaplan's marriage.  
in celebration of Melissa Foster's welcoming into the covenant.  
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in memory of Edward Ingersoll.  
in memory of Enders Ingersoll.  
in memory of Frank Hyman.  
in memory of Martin Cymrot.

**Bruce Katz** in memory of Elliot Klein.

**Rose Katz** in celebration of Melissa Foster's welcoming into the covenant.

**Susan Leff & Brad Post** in honor of Paul Cohen & Howard Steiermann for their love and support.

**Jordan & Carol Levitin** in memory of Carol's brother, Frank Hyman.

**Kim & Justyn Lezin-Haveson** in honor of Laurie Lezin-Schmidt's welcoming to the covenant.

**Jeffrey Lilly** in memory of Sam Rubin.

**Gerry Llamado & Arthur Slepian** in honor of Melissa Foster's welcoming to the covenant.

**Leslie Miessner** in memory of Kurt Wertheimer.

**Ron & Ruth Miguel**

**Meg Keene & David Mishook** in honor of Paul Cohen, Rabbi Angel and Cantor Bernstein for support during Meg's conversion.

**Elizabeth Nelson** in memory of Elliot Klein.

**Jeff Piade** in memory of Martin Cymrot.

**Carolyn Pines & Judy Schwartz** in honor of the CSZ staff - thank you for help with Emma's Bat Mitzvah.

**Ora Prochovnick** in memory of Elliot Klein.

**Hilda Rosenfeld** in memory of David Rothenberg.

**Gerald B. Rosenstein** in memory of Elliot Klein.

**Michael Sarid** in memory of Elliot Klein.

**Sara Stillman**

**Michael Strauss & Robin Klein-Strauss** in memory of Elliot Klein.

**Robert Tat** in memory of Elliot Klein.

**Yonah Thunderword** in support of the annual Tenderloin Luncheon.

**Susan Tubbesing & Sarah Nathe** in memory of Susan's grandmother, Laura Bezman.  
in memory of Susan's aunt, Doris Bezman.  
in memory of Sarah's mother & Susan's mother-in-law, Pearl Nathe.

**Lonnie Weiss**

**Steve Weitz** in memory of Elliot Klein.  
in deep gratitude to Rabbi Angel, Cantor Bernstein and the CSZ community for your kindness and support of Elliot's family and circle of friends.  
in honor of Meredith Rodgers and Marilyn Brown, and in memory of Elliot Klein.

**Michael Zimmerman** in memory of Elliot Klein.

**Lydia & David Zinn** in memory of Elaine Drummond.  
in memory of Elliot Klein.

## **High Holiday Donations**

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### Phyllis Mintzer Education Fund

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### Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

Rebekah Evans & Jodie Cavinder  
Jonathan Funk & John Arnold in appreciation of Rabbi Angel.  
Avraham Giannini in memory of Mary Lou Giannini.  
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Alex Ingersoll & Martin Tannenbaum in appreciation of Rabbi Angel's community leadership.  
The estate of Elliot Klein in appreciation of the Rabbi's ministering to Elliot and her support at the funeral.  
Judy Macks in memory of Elliot Klein.  
Meg Keene & David Mishook in honor of Rabbi Angel.  
Sharyn Saslafsky in memory of Elliot Klein.  
Susan Schley in appreciation of the gift of Siddur Sha'ar Zahav.  
Lydia & David Zinn in memory of Daniel McGoldrick.

### Rabbi Julius & Pearl Funk Musical Event Fund

Allan Berenstein in memory of Blanche Leyser.  
Jonathan Funk in memory of his uncle, Joseph Wiseman.  
Alex Ingersoll & Martin Tannenbaum in honor of Jon Funk & John Arnold's 25th anniversary.

### Rainbow Fund 5769

Roy Bateman in memory of Phyllis Lansky.  
Sara Haber & Beth Sousa

### August

7/8

Bimah Flowers Generously Sponsored by **The Keene & Mishook Families** In honor of their children's aufruf and wedding..

Friday Oneg Generously Sponsored by **Meg Keene & David Mishook** In honor of their aufruf and wedding.

21/22

Bimah Flowers & Friday Oneg Generously Sponsored by **Ilona Turner & Philip Kaplan** In honor of their aufruf.

28/29

Bimah Flowers Generously Sponsored by **Jonathan Funk & John Arnold** In honor of their 25th anniversary.

Friday Oneg Generously Co-Sponsored by **Nora Heins & Scott Murray** In honor of their aufruf.

&

**Sarita, Michael, Allan & Rachael Moss** In honor of Melissa Foster's welcoming into the covenant.

### September

4/5

Bimah Flowers Generously Sponsored by **Rachelle Boudreau and Elana Jacobs**

11/12

Bimah Flowers & Saturday Kiddush Generously Sponsored by **Paul Fishman & Mike Kurokawa and Joanne Engel & Ellen Haller** In honor of Danny Fishman-Engel's bar mitzvah.

25/26

Bimah Flowers & Saturday Kiddush Generously Sponsored by **Susan**

**Shalit & Mary Logger** In honor of Joanie Shalit's leading services and in honor of her upcoming bat mitzvah!





Thanks to the Rabbi Angel, Cantor Bernstein, Anne Bluethenthal, Andrea Guerra, Deborah Levy, Michael Schaffer and Howard Steiermann for putting together our fantastic Mincha Service on Yom Kippur.

## Mazel Tov!

Mazel Tov to **Rebekah Evans** and **Jodie Cavinder** who were married by Rabbi Angel on the evening Saturday, August 8.

Mazel Tov to **Meg Keene** and **David Mishook** who were married by Rabbi Angel on Sunday, August 9.

Mazel Tov to **Alyscia Perez-Reyes** and **Tazz Richards** who were married on August 8 by Tazz's father Cantor Stephen Richards.

Mazel Tov to **Ilona Turner** and **Philip Kaplan** who celebrated their Auf Ruf with us on Friday, August 21 and were married by **Rabbi Angel** over the last weekend in August.

Mazel Tov to **Laurie Lezin-Schmidt** who celebrated her Welcoming to the Covenant with us on Friday, August 21.

Mazel Tov to **Melissa Foster** who celebrated her Welcoming to the Covenant with us on Friday, August 28.

Mazel Tov to **Jonathan Funk** and **John Arnold** who celebrated their 25th Anniversary together; they were blessed by **Rabbi Angel** to commemorate this

special occasion on Friday, August 28.

Mazel Tov to **Scott Murray** and **Nora Heins**, who celebrated their Auf Ruf here at CSZ on Friday, August 28, and were married by Rabbi Angel in mid-September.

Mazel tov to **Lisa Inman** and **Alisa Gilden** on the birth of their daughter, **Ariel Pauline Inman Gilden**, born September 12 at 2:58 pm, 9 lbs 3 oz., 21.5 inches. Mazel tov as well to **Shaya** on becoming an older sister!

Mazel tov to **Susan Leff** and **Brad Post** on the birth of their daughter, **Sadie Joelle Post**. Sadie was born on September 28, weighing 7 lbs 2 oz and 18 inches tall. Susan and Sadie are doing just great! Also, Mazel Tov to **Frankie** on becoming a big brother!

## Naches

Yishar Koach to **Dan Bellm**, whose book *Practice* has won a 2009 Independent Publisher (IPPY) Book Award, Bronze Medal in Poetry.

Yishar Koach to **Larry Wong**, who

accepted the position of Food Service Director at Peninsula Volunteers in Menlo Park.

Yashir Koach to **Nancy Silverrod**, who has been appointed to the Association of Jewish Libraries' Sydney Taylor Book Award Committee.

Yashir Koach to **Bob Gordon**, Project Director of the California LGBT Tobacco Education Partnership. Bob is the recipient of a \$2000 award from the American Legacy Foundation's 2009 Dr. Alma S. Adams Scholarship for Outreach and Health Communications.

## New Members

We warmly welcome the following new members to our congregation: **David Block**, **Tasha Hudick**, **Rabbi Elliot Kukla**, **Gabriel Lampert**, **Ryan Newby** and **Coren Rau**, **Charlie**, **Ruth** (Charlie's mother), and **Nora** (Charlie's daughter) **Spiegel**

And we warmly welcome back returning members: **Julia Becker**, **Geoff Benjamin**, **Kathy Simon**, **Inbal Kashtan**, and their son **Yannai**



# Exploring a *Chevra Kadisha* for CSZ

**F**or the past eight months, a group of Sha'ar Zahav members, under the guidance of Rabbinical Intern Reuben Zellman and with the support of Rabbi Angel, has been meeting to explore forming a Chevra Kadisha for our synagogue community. The Chevra Kadisha (literally "holy society") prepares the dead for burial by ritually washing the body and dressing it in a shroud (tahara), and guarding it from the time of death until burial (shmira). Establishing a Chevra Kadisha was often the first concern of any new Jewish community, even before the establishment of a synagogue.

On two occasions during the last few years, members of CSZ volunteered to perform these rituals. This spurred our desire to learn more about Jewish traditions around death and to explore the possibility of establishing a permanent *Chevra Kadisha* for our community. In this way, we hope to be able to provide these services to any member of Sha'ar Zahav who wishes them for themselves or a close loved one.

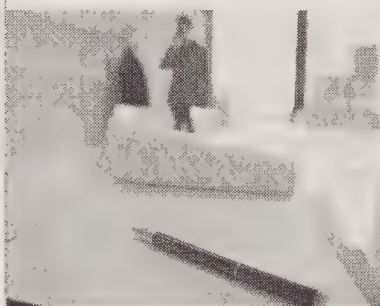
The *Chevra Kadisha* also seeks to provide ongoing education to the CSZ community about traditional Jewish practices around death and burial, and to educate the community at large about the specific needs of LGBTQ Jews in this regard.

The members of this exploratory group include Shoshana Levenberg,

Rose Katz, Karen Schiller, Sara Haber, Marc Lipshutz, Beth Sousa, Stefan Strassfeld, Lydia Zinn and Andrea Guerra.

An open meeting for people interested in learning more about the work of the *Chevra Kadisha* will be held on Tuesday, December 1 at 7 pm. Beginning in late January, Reuben Zellman will be teaching a multi-week class on Monday evenings about Jewish traditions in death and mourning. All are welcome to attend the open meeting to learn more about this project, ask questions, provide feedback, and get involved.

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## Condolences

Extend heartfelt condolences to the following CSZ members on the death of their loved ones:

**Bob Katz**, on the death of his sister, Annie Levy

**Danny Kodmur**, on the death of his aunt, Ayleen Kodmur

**Kipp Leyser**, friend of the congregation and member of the Naked Voices Trio, on the death of his mother, Blanche Leyser.

**Larry Wexler**, on the death of his friend, Marvin Freeman

**Ron Edelman**, on the death of his friend, Diana Bruno

**Jim Acerra**, on the death of his uncle, Gene Acerra

**Ilana Drummond**, on the death of her mother, Elaine Ruth Drummond

**Terry Fletcher**, on the death of her friend, David Fischer

**Leslie Miessner**, on the death of her cousin, Miriam Rapp

**Jeff Rubin**, on the death of his father, Sam Rubin

**Lydia Zinn**, on the death of her aunt, Fannie Gottesman

**Ron Edelman**, on the death of his cousin, Elaine Fox

**James Carlson**, on the death of his aunt, MJ Carlson

All the friends and family of **Daniel McGoldrick**, our beloved member

And all the friends and family of our beloved congregant, **Elliot Klein**, especially his former partner, Steve Weitz, and the Anderson-Colson Family

## Member Yahrzeits

### November

- 3 Forrest Kincade
- 3 Harvey Levine
- 7 Donald Albert
- 11 Bruce Apter
- 11 Sidney Rosenthal
- 16 Chuck Norton
- 22 Tristano Palermino

### December

- 4 Mailyn O'Keeffe
- 9 Nicholas Papadopoulos
- 18 David Glassberg
- 20 Norman David Kramer
- 21 Walter Palmer
- 22 Elijah Michael Silverrod MacLachlan
- 29 Allan Craig

## Read the JGF? Love the JGF? OK, Like the JGF?

If so, help us out! We are looking for the following "staff":

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**Asst. Editor**—interested in publishing? Are you well-organized and good with words? Learn a new skill by helping out with the JGF!

Contact Jo Ellen at  
jgkaiser@earthlink.net

## Please Be in Touch With Me

I am eager to be in touch with all members of the CSZ family whenever there are occasions of joy or sadness in your lives.

Where there is a death in the family, please call me as soon as possible.

We very much want to be there with you at a time of grief.

*Rabbi Camille  
Shira Angel*

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Helen Schwartz, Pre-need Counselor*



## Congregation Sha'ar Zahav

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Rabbi Camille Shira Angel



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SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
14 CHESHVAN 6:30 pm Ma'ariv Service	15 CHESHVAN 7:00 pm Intro to Judaism	16 CHESHVAN 6:30 pm Ma'ariv Service	17 CHESHVAN 6:30 pm Ma'ariv Service	18 CHESHVAN 6:30 pm Ma'ariv Service 7:00 pm SFOP meeting	19 CHESHVAN 6:00 pm Friday Night Live 8:15 pm Shabbat Service	20 CHESHVAN 9:00 am Torah Study 10:15 am Shabbat Simcha Service
21 CHESHVAN 6:30 pm Ma'ariv Service	22 CHESHVAN 6:30 pm Ma'ariv Service 7:00 pm Intro to Judaism	23 CHESHVAN 6:30 pm Ma'ariv service	24 CHESHVAN 6:30 pm Ma'ariv Service 7:00 pm Communications Com mt.	25 CHESHVAN 6:30 pm Ma'ariv Service 7:00 pm Welcoming Com mt.	26 CHESHVAN 7:30 pm Shabbat Service Scholar in Residence Weekend	27 CHESHVAN 9:00 am Torah Study 10:15 am Shabbat Service Scholar in Residence
28 CHESHVAN 6:30 pm Ma'ariv service	29 CHESHVAN 6:30 pm Ma'ariv Service 7:00 pm Chorus Rehearsal	30 CHESHVAN 6:30 pm Ma'ariv service	1 KISLEV 6:30 pm Ma'ariv service	2 KISLEV 6:30 pm Ma'ariv Service 6:45 pm Va'ad meeting	3 KISLEV 7:30 pm Shabbat Service Transgender Remembrance Shabbat 9:00 pm Post-oneg Social group	4 KISLEV 9:00 am Torah Study 10:15 am Shabbat Service Julia Shorofsky Bat Mitzvah
5 KISLEV 6:30 pm Ma'ariv service	6 KISLEV 6:30 pm Ma'ariv Service 7:00 pm Chorus Rehearsal	7 KISLEV 6:30 pm Ma'ariv Service 7:00 pm Interfaith Thanksgiving Service	8 KISLEV 6:30 pm Ma'ariv Service	9 KISLEV Thanksgiving Day Office Closed	10 KISLEV 7:30 pm Shabbat Service	11 KISLEV 9:00 am Torah Study 10:15 am Shabbat Service
12 KISLEV 6:30 pm Ma'ariv Service	13 KISLEV 6:30 pm Ma'ariv Service 7:00 pm Chorus Rehearsal 7:00 pm Fundamentalism class					



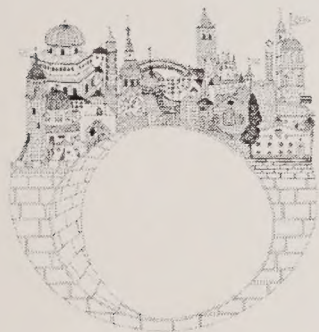




# Siddur Sha'ar Zahav

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